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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General's Office Wins Conviction for Public Benefits Fraud

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Dec. 13, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the conviction of Denise Crouse, 49, of Georgia, on charges of theft and fraud. The guilty verdict was announced Wednesday after a three-day trial in Maricopa County Superior Court.

Between 1995 and 1999, Crouse lived in Scottsdale and Glendale. She fraudulently collected more than \$20,000 in Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for her disabled son, though he was not eligible to receive them. Her son is the beneficiary of a trust fund worth more than \$1 million that was established to ensure his comfort and care. SSI is a public assistance program designed to help seniors and the disabled with low incomes.

During trial, Crouse testified that, in addition to her son's trust fund, she held assets worth between \$1 million and \$2 million. When confronted by Social Security claims representatives after her son's trust fund was discovered, Crouse told them that the trust fund was "none of their business." Crouse later moved to Georgia, where she again attempted to claim SSI and Medicaid benefits for her son.

Crouse is scheduled to be sentenced on Jan. 18, 2008. She faces up to 10 years in prison. The conviction follows an investigation conducted by the Social Security Administration's Inspector General's Office. Assistant Attorney General Gail Thackeray prosecuted this case.

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